

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the

P A R I S H - C H U R C H

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L A M B E T H,

On SUNDAY the 20th of
October, 1717.

By the Right Reverend Fa-
ther in God, E D M U N D,
Lord Bishop of *Lincoln*.

Upon his LEAVING the said Parish.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Y E A R 1717.

MEMORANDUM

Presented to the

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION

OF

INVESTIGATION

ON 25th DAY OF

October 1871



by the High

Commissioner

Lord Bishop of

London

Printed in the

Printed in the

2 T H E S S. iii. 3, 4.

*The Lord is faithful, who
shall stablish you, and keep
you from evil :*

*And we have confidence in the
Lord touching you, that ye both
do, and will do, the things
which we command you.*



A F T E R Saint Paul had
preached the Gospel to
the Thessalonians, and
was call'd from thence
to propagate it in other Parts ; he
wrote two Epistles to the Christians
there, to exhort them to a stedfast
Perseverance in the Faith and Do-
ctrine of Christ. And, in the Ver-

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ses which I have chosen for the Subject of this Discourse, he tells them, in the first place, That as for God, he was *Faithful*, and, wherever he found a sincere Mind, would assuredly send into it such supplies of Spiritual strength and comfort, as should be necessary to establish it in the Truth of the Gospel : *The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.* To which he adds, in the next Verse, That as for *Them* also, he had great Confidence in them, that they did not only keep in remembrance the Doctrines which he had deliver'd to them ; but likewise, that every one of them would be diligent in practising those Doctrines, in fashioning their Lives according to the Rules, which he, in the Name and by the Authority of Christ, had recommended to them.

It is now fourteen Years, within a few Weeks, since the Divine Providence

at *Lambeth.*

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vidence call'd me to the Exercise of the Ministry amongst you ; and, I bless God, such hath been your disposition to receive the Word preach'd, and so effectual the Divine Assistance in preparing your hearts for it ; that I can now reflect, with great Comfort, that, by his Grace, my Preaching and my Labour among you have not been in vain.

And since it hath pleased the same Providence to call me to another Administration in the Church ; I am willing to leave upon your Minds some special Lessons and Precepts, which I have often and earnestly inculcated from this Place, and which I desire may be more particularly remember'd by you ; being such, as are of most frequent and general use in the Christian Life, and such as have a more immediate tendency, as well to keep alive in your hearts a sense of Duty

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towards

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towards God, as to make you mutual Blessings and Comforts to one another.

And the first that I shall name, as being of most general Concern, is,

I. *Diligence in your respective Callings*; which is the most constant and most effectual Guard to the Virtue and Innocence of Mankind; as it keeps all their thoughts fixt and stedfast in an honest Course, and leaves no place, either for Intemperance, Luxury, and such other Excesses, as grievously defile both Body and Soul; or for meddling in the concerns of your Neighbours, which is the effect of Idleness, and usually ends in Contention, and Anger, and Malice. Consider also, that by Diligence in your Callings, you are, every day, every hour, discharging the great Duty of providing for your Families

lies in a just and honest way ; the Neglect of which, as the Apostle tells you, is worse than Infidelity, 1 Tim. v. 8. *If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he is worse than an Infidel.* And that a Life of Labour and Diligence may be likewise easy and comfortable to you ; always remember, that it is God, who hath placed you in your several stations ; and then you will apply your selves to the duties of them, not because you are forc'd to do it for the sake of a subsistence, but because you are desirous to comply in all things with the Will and Providence of God. A Principle, that will make you *Easy* and *Cheerful* in your several Employments ; while you are sensible, that a conscientious Attendance on the business of your Callings, is one continued Act of Submission and Obedience to God, and

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entitles you to an everlasting Inheritance of Rest and Glory. This is the way of thinking and reasoning, which the Apostle himself teaches you, Col. iii. 23, 24. *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance ; for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

But, in order to keep up in your hearts such a Religious sense of things; and to secure a constant Blessing from God upon your honest Endeavours ; that which I must recommend to you, in the next place, is,

II. *Family and Closet Devotion ;* which I have heretofore recommended to you at large, both from the Pulpit and the Press, and must now earnestly recommend it again ; as being well assur'd, that there is not a more effectual means, to preserve
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upon the minds of Men an habitual sense of God and Religion. And since no sort of Persons are more apt to be drawn into a forgetfulness of the next Life, than those who are much engaged in the Cares and Business of this ; it is plain, that none have greater need of daily Devotion, to prevent that forgetfulness, and to imprint upon their minds a due sense and remembrance of heavenly things. Nor is it easy to suppose (on the other hand) how any Member of a Family, in which daily Devotion is used, can go on securely in the practice of any known sin ; while a Fear and Reverence of Almighty God is thus daily revived upon his mind. As a further Argument to the practice of this Duty, add a serious remembrance of the weakness and folly of human nature ; how unable we are, of our selves, to do any thing that is

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is truly wise or good ; and how necessary it is, on this account, that we seek daily to God for his Blessing, to direct and prosper us in all our Undertakings. For, certainly, if you consider these things aright, you cannot doubt, but that the small portion of your time which daily Devotion takes up, is abundantly recompens'd by the manifold Blessings and Benefits, which it brings down from Heaven upon you and your Families. And therefore let me earnestly beseech as many of you as have not yet settled this practice of Daily Prayer in your Families, to begin it without delay, and not to deprive your selves any longer of those unspeakable Advantages, which it will bring to your Souls, and Bodies, and Estates.

III. The next thing which I would earnestly recommend to you
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all, is, a *Religious Observation of the Lord's day.* The praying to God for Blessings which we stand in need of, and the praising him for Mercies that we have receiv'd, are Duties which Nature teaches us, and such as immediately arise from our dependance on Him : And as the *daily* performance of these, is a thing most reasonable in it self ; so hath it been the practice of Religious Persons in all Ages, to mix those heavenly Exercises with the daily business of their Lives. But the Religious Observation of the *Lord's day*, is yet more strictly required at our hands ; as it hath pleas'd God to forbid our worldly pursuits on that day, and to set it apart for his own Service and Worship ; and particularly, for the solemn Assembling of Christian Congregations for that end. In compliance therefore with this wise and holy Institution, let it
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be your serious endeavour, as oft as the Lord's day comes, to banish out of your thoughts the concerns of this World, and to employ them, not in idle and unnecessary Diversions, but in holy and spiritual Exercises: In publick, by repairing to the Church, as constantly as health and other Avocations really necessary, will permit, and in a devout and serious Attendance throughout the several Offices which are perform'd there: At home, in Catechising your Children, and reading the Holy Scriptures and other useful Books to your Families; in Religious Discourse, and private Meditation; in looking back upon your past Lives, and examining the present state and condition of your Souls. These are the Employments proper for the Lord's day; such as are suitable to the Design of God in appointing this Spiritual Rest upon Earth

Earth, and such as do naturally prepare you for his everlasting Rest in Heaven.

IV. At the same time that I recommend to you a constant and serious Attendance upon all the Offices of the Church, in general ; I must exhort you, particularly, to a *frequent Attendance upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* ; in which we are expressly commanded by Christ and his Apostle, to declare our thankful remembrance of his dying for us, together with our spiritual Union to him our Head, and to our Christian Neighbours, as Fellow-members of the same Body. And as such publick and solemn Expressions , of Thankfulness to our Blessed Lord, and of our sincere Love to him and our Fellow-Christians, are the means of uniting us more closely to Christ, and of grafting us more firmly into his

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his Body ; so we cannot doubt, but they are also the means of deriving to us greater degrees of spiritual Life, and more plentiful Influences of his Holy Spirit. But it is not needful to enlarge here upon the Benefits of frequent Communion ; since a distinct Account of them, and of the nature and design of that Holy Institution, hath been long since put into your hands ; and the Objections that are usually made against it, have been there particularly consider'd and answer'd. And therefore I shall here mention but one motive to the frequent receiving of it, which must be of very great weight with every sincere Christian, That since the Examining of our Lives, is one necessary Preparation for this Holy Ordinance ; the receiving it frequently, is the sure means of keeping the Accounts between God and our selves, clear and distinct, and will not

not suffer a Christian to go on long in the practice of any known Sin. Upon which consideration, let me beseech those who seldom or never Communicate, to Examine their Consciences fairly and honestly, whether a Willingness to continue in Sin, is not the true reason of their Unwillingness to come to the Sacrament.

V. The next thing which I earnestly desire you to be mindful of, is the Obligation you are under, in your several stations, *to promote the Honour of God, and to discountenance Profaneness and Immorality of all kinds.* It is a melancholy Truth, and what we feel by sad Experience, that these are not sufficiently discountenanced in our Fleets; and by this means, such Parishes as abound with sea-faring men, who come home infected with the habits of obscene and
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profane Conversation, must of course abound with those Vices, unless great care be taken to check and restrain them, and the younger sort be diligently guarded against the infection of such wicked Examples. And tho' Ministers may do great service in this way, by frequent Reproofs and Admonitions, where they shall be found necessary ; yet it is a work, which they cannot thoroughly effect, especially in large Parishes, without the help of Parents and Masters, who have authority over young persons, and are daily witnesses of their Conversation ; and who ought to remember, that the discouraging such wicked practices in those under their Care, is a Duty that properly belongs to their stations ; for the conscientious performance of which they stand accountable to Almighty God. And what they are especially obliged to by their stations, as they are
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Parents and Masters, is incumbent upon all others, by their Profession, as they are Christians; who tho' they have no authority to correct, yet may have frequent opportunities to reprove and exhort; and let me intreat you all, to lay hold on such opportunities, as well out of a just concern for the Honour of God, and out of tenderness to the Souls of those poor Wretches, as to prevent the Judgments that God may justly send upon Persons and Societies, who, by tolerating open Profaneness, shew themselves to be utterly unconcern'd for his Honour upon Earth.

And while I am exhorting you to a due Zeal in suppressing Profaneness and Immorality; I must not omit to put you in mind, that however Chastisement and Reproof are the best Remedies that we can apply to this Disease, after it is once got into the Soul; yet the most effectual
Reme-

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Remedy of all, and the Service most acceptable to God, is, to prevent the Disease it self ; first, by instructing your Children carefully in the Principles of Religion, and seasoning their minds with an early sense of Duty to God ; and then, by keeping such a watchful eye over their Behaviour and Conversation , as may check and prevent the *first Beginnings* of every thing that can be called Immoral or Profane.

VI. and Lastly, Next to the Regard which you owe to the Honour of God and his Holy Name ; I must particularly recommend to you the practice of another Duty which you owe to one another, and that is, *To live in Peace, and Love, and Unity ;* not to injure, or vex, or disquiet, but on the contrary, to assist and comfort one another ; not to behave yourselves towards your Neighbours with
 wrath

wrath or bitterness, but always with Meekness and Charity and Forbearance. Be ready and desirous on all occasions, to testify your sincere affection towards them, by doing them all the good you can; which will engage them in suitable Returns of Kindness and Friendship to you; and these mutual Exchanges of good Offices, will make you mutual Comforts and Blessings to one another. This is the great foundation of our Happiness in the present Life, and this the great Commandment which our Saviour gave, by way of preparation for the next; for so he himself tells us, John xv. 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you*; and John xiii. 35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another*; and St. John, in his first Epistle, iv. 20. makes the Love of our Brethren, a necessary testimony of the Love

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Love of God ; *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen ?*

And it is the great importance of this Duty of Love, and the necessity of it in the Character and Spirit of a true Christian, that makes St. Paul inculcate it every where with so much earnestness ; labouring, at the same time, to guard the Christians to whom he writes, against all such inordinate desires and practices, as oppose and extinguish that Divine Disposition of the Soul. And since I am now pursuing the same end, out of an earnest desire of your Spiritual and Temporal Good ; it is certain, that I cannot offer any thing, that will leave a stronger and more lasting Impression upon your minds, than the very words of that great Apostle.

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In his Epistle to the Ephesians (Chap. iv. 31, 32) he gives them this strict and solemn Command: *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.* And again, Coloss. iii. 12. *Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved,) bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* To the same purpose, is his exhortation to the Christians at Rome, Chap. xii. 10. *Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; and that other to the Philippians, Chap. xi. 2. Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded; having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

And

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And now, my Brethren, having deliver'd the several Exhortations that I was willing to leave upon your minds, with that plainness and simplicity which hath always been my manner among you ; I may say with *St. Paul* in the Text, *That I have confidence in the Lord touching you*, that you will bear in remembrance the several Precepts which I have recommended to your Practice : And this Confidence I ground, as well upon your good and religious dispositions, as upon your kind acceptance of my Labour and Ministry among you, in a course of many Years.

What remains now, but that I recommend you all to the Grace and Mercy of God, in the words of the Apostle, *Heb. xii. 21. Now the God of Peace make you perfect in every good work, to do his will ; working in you that which is well pleasing in his*

his sight : And I pray God, your
whole spirit and soul and
body, be preserved pure 1 Theff. v. 23.
and blameless, unto the
coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, brethren, Fare-
well ; be perfect, be of 2 Cor. xiii. 11.
good comfort, be of one
mind, live in peace ; and the God of
Love and Peace be with you.

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in light: that I pray God, your
whole spirit and soul may
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